

# Fast Blast

## California Student Aid Commission

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September 14, 2007

*In support of the Commission's ongoing goal of providing California's financial aid community with proactive and current updates, we are providing this update on programs and projects. Please share this with any interested person who may not have received this newsletter.*

### Cal Grant Payments Issued

I want to commend schools for the enormous efforts that were made to minimize the impact the Budget impasse had on our students. Many schools were able to assist students during these trying times.

In addition, I want to thank Commission staff for working diligently to expedite the processing of \$278 million in Cal Grant payments within one week of the signed Budget.

### California Chafee Checks Mailed

This week Commission staff completed processing and mailing checks to all foster students who were eligible under the Chafee program. Schools can expect to receive checks for Chafee within the next week.

### Fund Your Future publication series updated for school year 2008-09



Our award-winning *Fund Your Future* financial aid publications series has been updated for the 2008-09 school year and will be released October 1. The student workbook covers the major state and federal programs and how to apply for them. It features worksheets for evaluating financial aid offers and creating a spending plan, a chapter on 13 other ways

to pay for college, a financial aid checklist and one page of helpful Web sites. The counselors' guide details the application process, contains additional information on state programs and provides reproducible fact sheets in the back. One fact sheet, a financial aid summary, has been translated into eight languages. The counselors' guide contains the English and Spanish versions. You'll find PDF versions of the fact sheet in Vietnamese, Korean, Hmong, Mandarin, Russian and Armenian on our Web site at [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov) in mid-October. Rounding out the series is a brochure which summarizes the major state and financial aid programs and how to apply for students in grades 9-12.

Schools may order the publications by calling 916.526.7282 or faxing their requests to 916.526.8838. Publications can also be ordered online at [www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1072](http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1072). Be sure to include your school code with your orders.

### Institutional Participation Agreement Issue Papers Update

After more than a year of hard work by members of the Grant Advisory Committee and staff, who spent countless hours reviewing and revising the Institutional Participation Agreement (IPA), Commissioners approved the four-year IPA at their meeting last week. The IPA is the contract between the Commission and institutions participating in the Cal Grant program.

The IPA, which will become effective with the 2008-09 fiscal year, includes the following:

#### High School Graduation

The Commission will begin working on becoming the central repository of graduation confirmations.

#### California Residency

Public institutions will apply the California residency determination dates and processes already established by their governing boards to determine the residency status of their Cal Grant recipients.

Non-public institutions may use the start date of the term for which the student is first enrolled as a Cal

Grant recipient or the Commission's date for the preliminary awarding of the Cal Grant as their residency determination date for Cal Grant purposes. Non-public institutions may also adopt community college regulations or develop and document their own policy which is consistent with the community college regulations and Education Codes.

Additionally, the Commissioners voted unanimously to strongly urge institutions to not reestablish residency for transfer students who have already received their Cal Grant award and had their residency determined at previous schools.

The Commission recognizes its lack of authority to establish a policy for students whose residency determination differs at the campus level. But where institutional policy allows, the Commission supports maintaining the portability of the Cal Grant. We should point out that only a small number of students will be potentially affected by this situation.

### **Separate Accounts**

Institutions have a choice of commingling funds or maintaining them in a separate account. Further research will be done regarding the calculation of annual interest and will be reviewed by the Commissioners in November.

Please note that institutions are to continue to follow provisions in the current IPA until the new version goes into effect on July 1, 2008.

I am pleased that staff and our stakeholders worked in good faith over these final months. Thank you all for your successful contributions.

### **Commission Staff Meets with Cal-SOAP Directors to Discuss Budget Reduction**

Our outreach staff met with the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) project directors Thursday to discuss how best to trim program services in light of the \$2.2 million budget reduction.

The budget for Cal-SOAP, a 29-year-old program that provides college preparation and financial aid services to about 200,000 disadvantaged youth in middle and high schools each year, was cut by more than 25 percent this fiscal year, to \$6.4 million. The program not only provides valuable in-school tutoring, but it hosts college tours, financial aid nights and Cash for

College workshops. Project directors from the 15 existing regional programs provided suggested reductions. The Commission must determine how to best continue to fund the programs throughout the State.

Concurrent discussions are also under way with stakeholders in the Solano area who are trying to re-establish the Cal-SOAP services in that area.

We value the well-established State Cal-SOAP programs, which provide that all-important first contact with disadvantaged youths to point them toward the path to higher education.

It is our goal to implement the budget reductions thoughtfully and fairly, and to minimize the impact on students. We will hold a special Commission meeting on September 25 to finalize revised program budgets. Please check our Commission calendar at [www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?ID=24](http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?ID=24) to find out specific information about this meeting. We will also provide updates in upcoming issues of Fast Blast.

### **Cal Grant GPA Deadline**

The deadline to submit late GPA appeals to the Commission for September Cal Grant Competitive program applicants is Monday, September 24, 2007. For more information, please see Operations Memo GOM 2007-29 at:

[www.csac.ca.gov/secured/operationmemos/2007.asp](http://www.csac.ca.gov/secured/operationmemos/2007.asp)

**Talk with us-** We appreciate any comments or feedback you may have regarding the *Fast Blast*. Please forward your comments to [www.fastblast@csac.ca.gov](mailto:www.fastblast@csac.ca.gov). If this message reaches school staff who are not currently on the Commission's ListServ and wish to be added, they can log on to [csac.ca.gov](http://csac.ca.gov) and click on Links and CSAC List Services.

